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Types of Humor

By Walter E. Myer

YOU can tell a great deal about a person by the things he laughs at. Many, for example, laugh at the misfortunes of others. An accident, even though painful, is often regarded as quite amusing. And there are people who think it is very funny to make biting, sarcastic remarks. Their wit has a hard edge. Frequently it hurts those at whom it is directed and it fails to amuse others.

One who uses his wits to hurt feelings or to cause discomfort, or one who enjoys seeing others in difficult situations, has in him a streak of cruelty. It is revealed by his jokes, his conversation, his laughter. It disfigures his personality, makes enemies of those who bear the brunt of his "wit," and loses the respect of those who are present when his barbed tongue inflicts wounds upon its victims.

It is a pity that humor should be perverted to such uses. Humor at its best is a saving grace. It helps us through many difficulties. It makes life pleasant and happy.

And humor at its best is kindly. A person with a fine sense of humor sees amusing angles to the most serious problems. He is frequently finding something to smile about; frequently suggesting something surprising or ridiculous, and doing so in such a way as to give everyone a laugh and to give no one pain.

That was the sort of humor which Abraham Lincoln possessed, and which carried him and his associates through many trying hours. It is the kind which all should try to develop.

A world without humor would be a dull place, and an individual without a sense of humor misses the greatest joys which life affords. But a sense of humor should develop along with one's other appreciations. It may be expected to change as one proceeds with his education and becomes more



Walter E. Myer

mature. Situations and jokes that once seemed hilarious will lose their humor, while incidents that once seemed mirthless will become funny.

It seems too bad that so many people, if one may judge by the roars of laughter that emerge from crowds at the movies, have ceased to grow in their appreciation of humor. They laugh at stupid and pointless jokes which might amuse a 10-year-old, but which should not impress one who has passed the childish age.

One trouble with our humor may be that we overwork it. No one can be funny all the time, and no one should try to be. Humor in moderation, humor that is discriminating, that is kindly and considerate—humor of that kind may well be practiced and appreciated. It should be cultivated by everyone. Humor of this kind is an art which may be acquired by any intelligent person.

A good sense of humor is important in your work. It is much easier to get a difficult job done if you can smile, rather than scowl and complain, and those who work with you are bound to appreciate your attitude.



THESE LOS ANGELES firemen are watching a demonstration of fire-resistant paint. The side of the house not burning was covered with a new paint product called Flamemaster 11. It is intended to retard the spread of a fire, thus giving occupants time in which to escape.

Science in the News

PILOTS of high-speed, noisy airplanes in the future may "speak through an ear" to give commands to the crew aboard, or to send radio messages.

Speech through the mouth into present-day microphones sometimes becomes unintelligible when plane noise is high. "Ear speech" to overcome this difficulty was worked out by Ohio State University scientists at the request of our Air Force.

The new system works this way: A soundproof box covers mouth and nose of the pilot. He speaks with his mouth, but his words are broadcast through his ear with the aid of a special microphone and other electronic devices.

While "ear speech" is affected somewhat by background noise, it often can be heard when normal speech is not understandable.

Just a small amount of pressure on the foot pedal will stop cars equipped with today's modern power brakes quickly and easily. The next development may be brakes that require no pressure and no brake pedal. Experiments are being made with a braking system hooked to the gas accelerator. If a driver wishes to stop his car, he has only to lift his foot from the accelerator. Brakes are applied automatically.

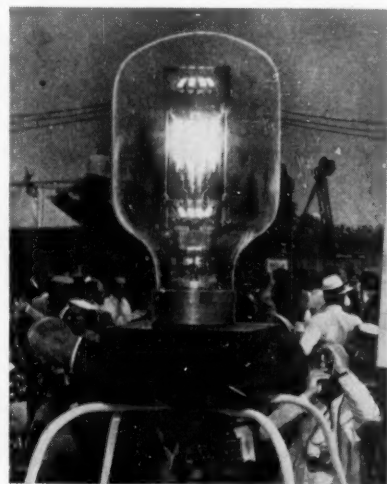
Talk of hairsplitting is out of date. Today's scientists are now drilling tiny holes into strands of human hair. A drill of one-thousandth of an inch makes the holes which are invisible to the eye. The drill is so delicate it could be broken by accidental contact with paper tissue. General Electric uses the drill to make tiny apertures for electron beams in sensitive X-ray equipment.

Cows chewing grass contentedly in the pasture sometimes pick up pieces of wire, bolts, or other metal objects that may damage the stomach and cause death. Now, Dr. J. A. Muffly

of Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, has come up with a "magnetic retriever" that may reduce the number of deaths from "hardware disease."

The retriever consists of a magnet on a piece of chain, which is encased in a rubber tube. A larger plastic tube is slipped over the rubber one, and the whole device is lowered into the cow's stomach. The magnet picks up pieces of metal, the tube with magnet and metal is withdrawn, and the cow starts on the road to recovery.

Italy, which for years neglected her vast stores of natural fuel, now claims to have the longest network of natural-gas pipelines in Europe. In 1948, the network reached out only 500 miles from the Po Valley, a northern area where the gas is found. The network now extends for 2,500 miles, and it is being steadily expanded. The gas is a welcome and valuable source of power in industry, as a substitute for coal. Italy has almost no coal of her own, and has been forced to buy it in other countries.



COMMERCIAL atomic-electric power is here. The oversize electric bulb was lighted in a ceremony at Milton, New York, to open the free world's first atomic-electric power plant. The plant is actually supplying electricity for commercial use.

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- Zhukov, Georgi. Oct 18—4